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any thing similar in Wales. The passage from Carew is this. “The Guary* Miracle, in English, Miracle-Play, is a kind of interlude compiled, in Cornish, out of some scripture history †. For representing this they raise an earthen amphitheatre, in some open field, having the diameter of this inclosed plain some 40 or 50 feet. The country people flock from all sides to see and hear it: for they have therein devils and devices to delight as well the eye as the ear. The players conne not their parts without book, but are prompted by one called the Ordinary, who followeth at their heels, with the book in his hand.” In an act of Parliament, 4th Hen. IV. mention is made of certain *Wastours*‡, Master Rimo urs (Rimers) and Minstrels, who infested the land of Wales, to make commorths or gatherings upon the people there. Query the meaning of this? I am afraid, lest I should be too troublesome with my queries, and, therefore, reserve what you please to answer at any future hour; only send me an account of your romances now, which will oblige, dear Sir, your affectionate and faithful servant,

THOMAS PERCY.

LETTER XII.

*The Same to the Same, dated EASTON MAUDIT, Dec.
31, 1763.*

DEAR SIR,—I have been many months indebted to you for a very obliging letter. I delayed to answer it, in expectation of seeing your curious Specimens of Ancient British Poetry, advertised, from the press before this time. Permit me to enquire, what forwardness that intended publication (which you gave me hopes in your last of seeing speedily printed) is in? From the translations, you have already favoured me with a sight of, I conceive a very favourable idea of the merit of your ancient bards, and should be sorry to have their precious relics swallowed up and lost, in the gulph of time; a danger, which they will incur, if you, that are so well acquainted with their beauties,

* Brit. *Chwareu*. P. B. W.

† There is preserved, in the British Museum, a very curious copy of a Cornish play or opera, entitled the “Creation of the World,” translated *verba-tim* into English, and collated with the original, by the celebrated Mr. Edward Llwyd. Some extracts from this will be given in a future Number—ED.

‡ Gwestwyr, P. B. W.

and so capable of making them understood by others, neglect this opportunity of preserving them. I can readily conceive, that many of their most beautiful peculiarities cannot possibly be translated into another language, but even through the medium of a prose translation one can discern a rich vein of poetry, and even classical correctness, infinitely superior to any other compositions of that age, that we are acquainted with. Certain I am, that our own nation, at that time, produced nothing that wears the most distant resemblance to their merit.

I have lately been collecting specimens of English poetry, through every age, from the time of the Saxons down to that of Elizabeth, and am ashamed to shew you what wretched stuff our rhimers produced at the same time that your bards were celebrating the praise of Llywelyn, with a spirit scarce inferior to Pindar. Inclosed I send you a specimen of an Elegy on the death of Edward I.—that cruel Edward, who made such havoc among the Cambrian poets. I know not whether you will be able to decipher these foul scrawls, or distinguish them from the marginal explications, with which I have accompanied them. But you will see enough to be convinced of the infinite superiority of your own bards; nor do I know, that any of the nations of the continent (unless perchance Italy, which now about began to be honoured by Dante) were able at that time to write better than the English. The French, I am well assured, were not. One thing is observable in the Elegy on Edward the First, which is, that the poet, in order to do the more honour to his hero, puts his eulogium in the mouth of the Pope, with the same kind of fiction as a modern bard would have raised up Britannia or the genius of Europe, sounding forth his praises. Considering the destruction, which our merciless monarch made among the last sons of ancient genius, it may be looked upon as a just judgment upon him, that he had no better than these miserable rhimes to disgrace his memory.

With regard to your Specimens, should they not yet be put to the press, I should take it for a great favor, if you would indulge me with a sight of them in MS. or at least the Dissertation to be prefixed to them; an indulgence that would not be abused, and which, under whatever restrictions you please, would oblige, dear Sir, your very affectionate and faithful servant,

THOMAS PERCY.